

O. Donkle

THE LAY-MAN'S MAGAZINE.

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND—AND THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF."

Number 25] MARTINSBURGH, MAY 2, 1816. [Volume 1.

THE YOUNG COTTAGER.

*By the author of the
DAIRYMAN'S DAUGHTER.*

PART III.

DIVINE grace educates the reasoning faculties of the soul, as well as the best affections of the heart ; and happily consecrates them both to the glory of the Redeemer. Neither the disadvantages of poverty, nor the inexperience of childhood, are barriers able to resist the mighty influences of the spirit of God, when " he goeth forth where he listeth."—" God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise : and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." The truth of this scriptural assertion was peculiarly evident in the case of my young parishioner.

Little Jane's illness was of a lingering nature. I often visited her. The soul of this young Christian was gradually, but effectually, preparing for heaven. I have seldom witnessed in any older person, under similar circumstances, stronger marks of earnest inquiry, continual seriousness, and holy affections. One morning, as I was walking through the church-yard, in my way to visit her, I stopped to look at the epitaph which had made such a deep impression on her mind. I was struck with the reflection of the important consequences which might result from a more frequent and judicious attention to the inscriptions placed in our burying grounds, as memorials of the departed. The idea occurred to my thoughts, that as the

two stone tables given by God to Moses were once a mean of communicating to the Jews, from age to age, the revelation of God's will as concerning the law : so these funeral tables of stone may, under a better dispensation, bear a never failing proclamation of God's good will to sinners, as revealed in the gospel of his grace, from generation to generation. I have often lamented, when indulging a contemplation among the graves, that some of the inscriptions were coarse and ridiculous ; others, absurdly flattering ; many expressive of sentiments at variance with the true principles of the word of God ; not a few, barren and unaccompanied with a single word of useful instruction to the reader. Thus a very important opportunity of conveying scriptural admonition is lost. I wish that every grave-stone might not only record the names of our deceased friends, but also proclaim the name of Jesus, as the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. Perhaps, if the Ministers of religion were to interest themselves in this matter, and accustom their people to consult them as to the nature of the monumental inscriptions which they wish to introduce into churches and church-yards, a gradual improvement would take place in this respect. What is offensive, useless, or erroneous, would no longer find admittance, and a succession of valuable warning and consolation to the living would perpetuate the memory of the dead.

What can be more disgusting than the too common spectacle of trifling licentious travellers, wandering about the church-yards of the different places through which they pass, in search

of rude, ungrammatical, ill-spelt, and absurd verses among the grave-stones; and this for the gratification of their unholy scorn and ridicule! And yet how much is it to be deplored that such persons are seldom disappointed in finding many instances which too readily afford them the unfeeling satisfaction which they seek! I therefore offer this suggestion to my reverend brethren, that as no monument or stone can be placed in a church or church-yard without their express consent and approbation, whether one condition of that consent being granted, should not be a previous inspection and approval of every inscription which may be so placed within the precincts of the sanctuary.

The reader will pardon this digression, which evidently arose from the peculiar connexion established in little Jane's history, between an epitaph inscribed on a grave stone, and the word of God inscribed on her heart, When I arrived at Jane's cottage, I found her in bed, reading Dr. Watt's Hymns for children, in which she took great pleasure.

'What are you reading this morning, Jane?'

'Sir, I have been thinking very much about some verses in my little book.—Here they are:

There is an hour when I must die,
Nor do I know how soon't will come;
A thousand children, young as I,
Are call'd by death to hear their doom.

Let me improve the hours I have,
Before the day of grace is fled;
There's no repentance in the grave,
Nor pardon offer'd to the dead.

'Sir, I feel all that to be very true, and I am afraid I do not improve the hours I have as I ought to do. I think I shall not live very long; and when I remember my sins, I say,

'Lord, at thy foot, ashamed I lie,
Upward I dare not look;

'Pardon my sins before I die,
'And blot them from thy book.'

Do you think he *will* pardon me, Sir?"

'My dear child, I have great hopes that he *has* pardoned you; that he has heard your prayers, and put you into the number of his true children already. You have had strong proofs of his mercy to your soul.'

'Yes, Sir, I have; and I wish to love and bless him for it. He is good, *very* good.'

It had for some time past occurred to my mind, that a course of regulated conversations on the first principles of religion, would be very desirable from time to time, for this interesting child's sake; and I thought the Church Catechism would be a proper groundwork for that purpose.

'Jenny,' said I, 'you can repeat the Catechism?'

'Yes, Sir; but I think that has been one of my sins in the sight of God.'

'What! repeating your Catechism?'

'Yes, Sir, in such a way as I used to do it.'

'How was that?'

'Very carelessly indeed. I never thought about the meaning of the words, and that must be very wrong. Sir, the Catechism is full of good things; I wish I understood them better.'

'Well then, my child, we will talk a little about those good things which, as you truly say, are contained in the Catechism. Did you ever consider what it is to be a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?'

'I think, Sir, I have lately considered it a good deal; and I want to be such, not only in name, but indeed and in truth. You once told me, Sir, that, 'as the branch is to the vine, and the stone to the building, and the limb to the body and the

head, so is a true believer to the Lord Jesus Christ.' But how am I to know that I belong to Christ as a true *member*, which you said one day in the church, means the same as a *limb* of the body, such as a leg or an arm ?'

' Do you love Christ now in a way you never used to do before ?'

' Yes, I think so indeed.'

' Why do you love him ?'

' Because he first loved me.'

' How do you know that he first loved you ?'

' Because he sent me instruction, and made me feel the sin of my heart, and taught me to pray for pardon, and love his ways ; he sent you to teach me, Sir, and to show me the way to be saved, and now I want to be saved in that way that he pleases. Sometimes I feel as if I loved all that he has said and done so much that I wish never to think about any thing else. I know I did not use to feel so ; and I think if he had not loved me first, my wicked heart would never have cared about him. I once loved any thing better than religion, but now it is every thing to me.'

' Do you believe in your heart that Christ is able and willing to save the chief of sinners ?'

' I do.'

' And what are you ?'

' A young, but a great sinner.'

' Is it not of his mercy that you know and feel yourself to be a sinner ?'

' Certainly ; yes, it must be so.'

' Do you earnestly desire to forsake all sin ?'

' If I know myself I do.'

' Do you feel a spirit within you, resisting sin, and making you hate it ?'

' Yes, I hope so.'

' Who gave you that spirit ? was you always so ?'

' It must be Christ, who loved me and gave himself for me. I was quite different once.'

' Now then, my dear Jane; does not

all this show a connexion between the Lord Jesus Christ and your soul ?— Does it not seem as if you lived, and moved, and had a spiritual being from him ? Just as a limb is connected with your body, and so with your head, and thereby gets power to live and move through the flowing of the blood from one to the other : so are you spiritually a limb or member of Christ, if you believe in him ; and thus obtain, through faith, a power to love him, and live to his praise and glory. Do you understand me ?'

' Yes, Sir, I believe I do ; and it is very comfortable to my thoughts to look up to Christ as a living head, and to consider myself as the least and lowest of all his members.'

' Now tell me what your thoughts are as to being a child of God ?'

' I am sure, Sir, I do not deserve to be called his child.'

' Can you tell me who does deserve it ?'

' No one, Sir.'

' How then comes any one to be a child of God, when by nature we all are children of wrath ?'

' By God's grace, Sir.'

' What does grace mean ?'

' Favour ; free favour to sinners.'

' Right ; and what does God bestow upon the children of wrath, when he makes them children of grace ?'

' A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ; is it not, Sir ?'

: Yes, this is the fruit of Christ's redeeming love : and I hope you are a partaker of the blessing. The family of God is named after him, and he is the first born of many brethren.— What a mercy that Christ calls himself, '*a brother!*' My little girl, he is *your* brother ; and will not be ashamed to own you, and present you to his Father at the last day, as one that he has purchased with his blood.'

' I wish I could love my Father and my Brother which are in heaven better than I do. Lord be merciful to

me a sinner ; I think, Sir, if I am a child of God, I am often a rebellious one. He shows kindness to me beyond others, and yet I make a very poor return.

'Are those thy favours day by day,
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than
they
And strive to serve thee best.'

'That will be the best way to approve yourself a real child of God.—Show your love and thankfulness to such a Father, who hath prepared for you an inheritance among the saints in light, and made you 'an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, as well as a member of Christ, and a child of God.' Do you know 'what the kingdom of heaven means?'

Just at that instant her mother entered the house below, and began to speak to a younger child in a passionate scolding tone of voice, accompanied by some very offensive language ; but quickly stopped on hearing us in conversation up stairs.

'Ah, my poor mother!' said the girl, 'you would not have stopped so short if Mr. — had not been here. Sir, you hear how my mother goes on ; pray say something to her ; she will not hear me.'

I went towards the stair-head, and called to the woman ; but she suddenly left the house, and for that time escaped reproof.

'Sir,' said little Jane, 'I am so afraid, if I go to heaven, I shall never see my poor mother there. As I lie here a-bed, Sir, for hours together, there is often so much wickedness, and noise, and quarreling down below, that I do not know how to bear it. It comes very near, Sir, when one's father and mother go on so. I want them all to turn to the Lord, and go to heaven.—Tell me now, Sir, something about being an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.'

"You may remember, my child, what I have told you, when explaining the Catechism in the church, that 'the kingdom of heaven' in the scriptures, means the Church of Christ upon earth as well as the state of glory in heaven. The one is a preparation for the other. All true christians are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and shall inherit the glory and happiness of his kingdom, and live with Christ, and be with him forever. This is the free gift of God to his adopted children ; and all that believe aright in Christ shall experience the truth of that promise, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' You are a poor girl now, but I trust, 'an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' You suffer now ; but are you not willing to suffer for his sake, and to bear patiently those things to which he calls you ?

'O yes, very willing ; I would not complain. It is all right.'

'Then, my dear, you shall reign with him. Through much tribulation you may, perhaps, enter into the kingdom of God ; but tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope. As a true 'member of Christ,' show yourself to be a dutiful 'child of God,' and your portion will be that of an inheritor in the kingdom of heaven.—Faithful is He that hath promised ; commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.'

'Thank you, Sir ; I do so love to hear of these things. And I think, Sir, I should not love them so much, if I had no part in them. Sir, there is one thing I want to ask you. It is a great thing, and I may be wrong—I am so young—And yet I hope I mean right—"

Here she hesitated, and paused.

'What is it? do not be fearful of mentioning it.'

A tear rolled down her cheek—a slight blush coloured her countenance. She lifted up her eyes to heaven for a moment, and fixing them on me with a solemn affecting look, said,

'May so young a poor child as I am be admitted to the Lord's supper? I have for some time wished it, but dared not to mention it, for fear you should think it wrong.'

'My dear Jenny, I have no doubt respecting it, and shall be very glad to converse with you on the subject, and hope that he who has given you the desire, will bless his own ordinance to your soul. Would you wish it now, or to-morrow?'

'To-morrow, if you please, Sir,—will you come to-morrow and talk to me about it, and if you think it proper, I shall be thankful. I am growing faint now—I hope to be better when you come again.'

I was much pleased with her proposal, and rejoiced in the prospect of seeing so young and sincere a Christian thus devote herself to the Lord, and receive the sacramental seal of a Saviour's love to her soul.

Disease was making rapid inroads upon her constitution, and she was aware of it. But as the outward man decayed, she was strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man. She was evidently ripening fast for a better world.

I remember these things with affectionate pleasure—they revive my earlier associations, and I hope the recollection does me good. I wish them to do good to thee, likewise, my reader; and therefore I write them down.

May the simplicity that is in Christ render

"The short and simple annals of the poor"

a mean of grace and blessing to thy

soul! Out of the mouth of this babe and suckling may God ordain thee strength! If thou art willing, thou shalt hear something further respecting her.

To be continued.

Letters relative to a tour on the Continent, undertaken at the request of the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in the year 1812, by the Rev. Ch. Fr. STEINKOPFF, M. A.

LETTER II.

Helsingburgh, June 30, 1812.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I doubt not but you have received my letter from Gothenburg. I left that town on Thursday (the 20th inst.) accompanied by Mr. Henderson, who, from his knowledge of the country and language, proved very useful to me. Our journey was attended with trouble and difficulty: pouring rains had swelled the rivers; our carriage had repeatedly to pass through very deep water, which at one time even entered into it, and completely wetted our feet. On the evening of Thursday, we came to a small town and fortress called Warberg, where a pious clergyman resides. He is the curate of a populous parish for which he receives only 20*l.* per annum, and has a large family; he is therefore under the necessity of keeping a school, which, in addition to the great attention he pays to the discharge of his ministerial duties, renders his life very laborious. He is indefatigable in doing good; and enjoys the great satisfaction of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in his hands. He is a member of the Evangelical Society at Stockholm, from which he received several new testaments for the supply of his poor par-

shioners. Among the rest he gave a copy to a woman, who has now read it five times with such attention and delight, that she has made rapid progress in divine knowledge, and makes very sensible remarks even on difficult passages—There is one rich, active, and charitable Lady in his parish, who assists him greatly in his acts of benevolence; yet there still remain 300 poor families destitute of the Scriptures. Having heard this excellent man relate all these circumstances, I felt truly happy, as an almoner of the society's bounty, to relieve the want of some of his poor people; and presented him with 10*l.* to purchase a number of the Stockholm society's bibles and testaments, for sale, or gratuitous distribution, at his discretion. The good man (who reminded me of Goldsmith's country clergyman) looked at me with an air of grateful surprise, which no words can describe. In the morning of the 27th we visited Dean Aising, whose parish contains a population of about 1700 souls. He showed me a paper, from which I saw with astonishment and pleasure, that he had ordered no less than 1258 bibles and testaments from the Stockholm society, for the benefit of his own parishioners and those of the adjoining villages, who had cheerfully subscribed for copies. "Still," added he, "there are perhaps 100 poor families in my own parish, and as many in each of the 11 other parishes that belong to my deanery, who are unable to pay for them." This at once proved the real want which subsisted previous to the establishment of the evangelical society; the great attention of the dean to these wants, the moment he saw he could supply them; and the need of further assistance. I left him the sum of 12*l.*

Last Sunday we spent with another Swedish Clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Thulin, who resides about four English miles from this place, and has

about 2000 people under his care.—He is so active in promoting the benevolent views of the Stockholm society, that he has procured about 800 subscribers, for their first edition of the Swedish bible, in his parish and its vicinity. He possesses the advantage of having some rich and benevolent individuals in it, who lay themselves out for the good of their fellow-creatures; but, considering the extent of his parish, and the opportunities he enjoys of distributing the Scriptures among the poor in neighbouring parishes, I agreed with Mr. Henderson to present him with 10*l.* The same sum I granted to the Rev. Mr. Wick, a Moravian minister who resides in Carlskrona, and in his annual visits through several Swedish provinces receives frequent applications for Bibles. The assistant Minister of Mr. Thulin is the Rev. Mr. Sundius, an excellent old man of 73, whom I heard address a number of pious Swedish peasants of both sexes. My mind was deeply affected by this interesting scene. On Monday morning Mr. Paterson arrived from Stockholm, after a fatiguing journey of four days and nights. We have since spent most of our time in a close review of all the past operations of our society in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Lapland. I rejoice to hear of the great activity of the Stockholm society, and of the peculiar attention which its committee had bestowed in presenting the public with as correct a copy of the Bible as they possibly could. No less than six correctors were employed; among whom their venerable President, the Right Hon. G. Leyonmark, Knight of the Order of the Polar Star, Vasa, &c. particularly distinguished himself, by discovering errors of the press which had escaped younger eyes.

The Stockholm society becomes more generally known in Sweden, and has already afforded many important advantages to the inhabitants of

that country. The Finnish Bible Society is composed of most respectable characters, and promises, extensive and lasting usefulness. As it is probable that the Finnish octavo bible on standing types will be printed at Petersburg, and Mr. Paterson has been requested to superintend the printing of the same, a door of entrance into that important city seems to be opened to him. He intends immediately to proceed thither by way of Stockholm and Abo. Mr. Henderson is to go to Copenhagen, to assist in the execution of the Icelandic bible, of which twenty sheets have left the press; and to proceed thence to Iceland, in order to see them properly distributed, provided he can obtain a passport from the Danish government. We are now looking forward to our different destinations; we inform, advise, strengthen, cheer and encourage each other; and I am fully persuaded, that our meeting and consulting together will, under the blessing of God, conduce to the best interests of our society.

JULY 1.—To-morrow morning, (God willing) I shall set my foot on Danish territory: I see it before me from the heights of this town. Strange feelings arise in my breast, but I trust in God! to Him I commit myself and my fellow-labourers. Their deeds are their best praise; they have done much for the dissemination of the holy scriptures in the northern parts of Europe, and if God spare their lives, and continue to prosper their way, they are likely to do still more. I recommend them, as well as myself, to the affectionate remembrance, and the united prayers of all the members of the society.

I request Mr. Paterson to send you at the expense of our society, ten Lapland bibles and as many testaments, (in addition to the six copies which are on their way to our library,) as I think a good use may be made of them for the benefit of our society, by

making a present of them to public libraries in England and in foreign parts. I also desired Mr. Paterson to inquire, whether one or two hundred copies of the Lapland bible published by the late Bishop Nordin, for sale among the Laplanders cannot be purchased by our society at a moderate price, for gratuitous distribution among the most needy of that interesting people.

The gospel of St. Mark in the Chinese, the Pentateuch in Bengalee, and the Hagiographa in the Osissa, are very serviceable to me: wherever I show them, they are looked at with high interest and delight.

To be continued.

EXTRACTS FROM LUTHER'S WRITINGS.

*Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law—
Psal. cxix. 18.*

Know, that the Holy Scriptures is a book which make the wisdom of all other books folly, as none teaches us eternal life but this alone. You must then, in the first place, despair of your own reason and understanding, and, falling on your knees must pray to God, with true humility and earnestness, that he will bestow on you, for the sake of his beloved Son, his Holy Spirit, to enlighten you, guide you and give you understanding. In the next place, you must read, with diligent remarks and reflections on what the Holy Ghost intends in the Scriptures. And you must beware of being wearied, or thinking that, after once or twice, you have read, heard, and said enough, and understood every thing to the bottom; for no divine ever did that, but they are like the untimely fruit, which fall off ere it is half ripe.—In the third place, trials are the true process which must teach you, not only to know and understand,

but also to experience, how right, how true, how sweet, how lively, how powerful, how consolatory the word of God is: wisdom above all wisdom!

This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.—Jer. xxiii. 6.

The natural man, since in all his works by which he would please God, he is uncertain and full of doubt, can have no right heart to turn to God, and call upon him; but shrinks back and flies from him, and must at last fall into hatred of God, and despair: for when he comes to the real combat and must stand before the Judge, he feels and sees, that with all his life and works, he can in no way whatever stand before the anger of God; but, notwithstanding all, must sink at once into the gulf. Now we must all be placed in such a necessity; and in order to overcome, we must have another foundation than our righteousness, or that of the law, even this eternal righteousness of Christ, who now sits at the right hand of the father, whom the devil can never overthrow, and the justice of God can say nothing against. Me, indeed, with all my life and works, the devil can overthrow, by bringing before me the Divine law and wrath, which carry every thing away before them, as the wind drives away the feather; but when, instead of me and my works, I point him to the right hand of the Father, where my Lord Christ sitteth, Him he is forced to leave, as he can neither condemn nor overthrow him.

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and truth—1 John iii. 18.

The apostle is here speaking against false brethren and hypocritical Christians, who have the Gospel on their lip and on their tongue, but are satisfied with the scum of it only, and allow themselves to think, that to

possess the Gospel and faith, consists only in words and a man's knowing how to prate. And so soon as they once belong to the Gospel, they are the only masters of the science: no one knows so well as they to rule and chide all the world, and none are so evangelical as themselves. But we may see that all this is the mere shell of religion, from this, that they take no care to live according to what they say, and to show their love so that others may see that they really possess the Gospel and are in earnest about it. But they seem to go on further than this, that they hold, that a man can obtain the pardon of sin, and be saved only through faith, and that he cannot obtain these blessings by works. And upon this they go on rotten and un sound, and will do no works at all, but pass every thing under the name of faith, and are in fact worse characters than before, and live, so that the world may justly blame them, to say nothing of their professing to belong to God.

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PRINTED BY
JOHN ALBURTIS,
Martinsburgh, Virginia.